



Fact Sheet

California Environmental Protection Agency

 **Air Resources Board**

Lead

Why is it important to reduce lead in the air?

Lead is a harmful air pollutant and has been identified by the Air Resources Board (ARB) as a toxic air contaminant. Certain forms of lead can be found in air, water, soil, food, consumer products, dust, and lead-based paint chips. Lead in the air can cause the level of lead found in the blood to increase which in turn can cause increased chances of cancer and non-cancer health effects to adults and children. Lead can affect the nervous, reproductive, digestive, and blood-forming systems, and also the kidneys. Children are especially sensitive to health effects due to lead in the air because they can absorb lead more easily and have developing nervous systems that are susceptible to lead-related health effects, including learning disabilities.

How is the ARB helping to reduce lead in the air?

Levels of lead in the air have decreased by over 98 percent in the last 30 years primarily due to the elimination of lead from gasoline. However, lead in the air is still a health concern, especially to children. In response to this, the ARB has prepared a guidance document about lead, the Risk Management Guidelines for New, Modified, and Existing Sources of Lead (Guidelines). These Guidelines provide methods to local air district staff for dealing with, and making informed decisions about, health effects from airborne lead to both adults and children living in California communities.

What are the benefits of these Guidelines?

The Guidelines will help the local air districts when permitting sources of lead emissions, based on the potential lead health risks to the surrounding community. The Guidelines will also help limit airborne lead in areas with already unhealthy environmental lead levels. The Guidelines recommend that new sources of lead apply equipment to keep emissions below levels of concern and require existing or modified sources of lead to reduce emissions below those given levels.

For more information

Visit our website at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/toxics.htm> or contact the ARB Public Information Office at (916) 322-2990. An electronic version of the Guidelines can be retrieved from our website at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/lead/lead.htm>. You may also obtain this document or the Guidelines in alternative format by contacting the ARB American Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator at (916) 322-4505 (for voice), (916) 324-9531 (for TDD, Sacramento area only), or (800) 700-8326 (for TDD, outside Sacramento).

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our web site at www.arb.ca.gov.